

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET INFORMATION

LAW (32)

MISSION

The mission of the Law Department is to deliver excellent and efficient legal counseling and representation to the Executive and Legislative branches of City government as mandated by the City Charter.

DESCRIPTION

The Law Department is headed by the Corporation Counsel, who is appointed by the Mayor. The Law Department is comprised of five divisions: Administration, Governmental Affairs, Labor, Property/Environmental and Litigation. Each division, with the exception of the Administration Division, is responsible for a discrete area of the law and is made up of several sections.

The Law Department is required, by Charter, to represent the City of Detroit in all civil actions or proceedings filed against the city. The Corporation Counsel may also prosecute any action or proceeding in which the city has a legal interest when directed to do so by the Mayor. The Corporation Counsel is the city prosecutor and shall institute, on behalf of the people, cases arising from the provisions of the charter or city ordinances, and prosecute all actions for the recovery of fines, penalties and forfeitures.

The Law Department is also responsible for providing advice and opinions to the Mayor, a member of City Council or the head of any city agency, for approving all contracts, bonds and written instruments and for drafting, upon the request of the Mayor or any member of City Council, any ordinance

or resolution for introduction before City Council.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

The demand for legal services has increased commensurate with the growth in volume and diversity of the City's operations. Even with the proposed reduction in staff and some operating funds in the upcoming fiscal year, the department remains committed to providing timely assistance and improving response time to its clients to acceptable industry standards.

The Law Department has attempted to keep pace with the growing demand through increased emphasis on client service and responsiveness; enhancing skills training of lawyers, paralegals and clerical support staff; improved management and supervision of the department's many areas of practices; modernization of Law's internal practice support systems such as automated time tracking and billing systems, records management system, case management and litigation support systems; streamlining of the department's systems; and improvement of law practice aids and manuals.

The Law Department has a range of major initiatives for each division for Fiscal Year 2004-05. The Tax and Revenue Collection Section has taken more aggressive action in assisting departments with their collection programs. In the last year DWSD and Municipal Parking have initiated collection of outstanding debts aided in part by the Tax and Revenue Collection Section.

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The Community Prosecution Section has embarked on a campaign of assisting Kids: through an increased truancy program, Cops: in training on writing civil infraction tickets and Clean: in prosecuting neighborhood blight violation. We are currently in our second year of grant-funded programs including two positions.

We have successfully completed the resolution of two Department of Justice investigations – Detroit Police Department and American's with Disabilities.

In conjunction with the 36th District Court, the Law Department is currently revamping and rewriting ordinances to increase fines and revenue coming to the City, as well as making the amounts of City fines on par

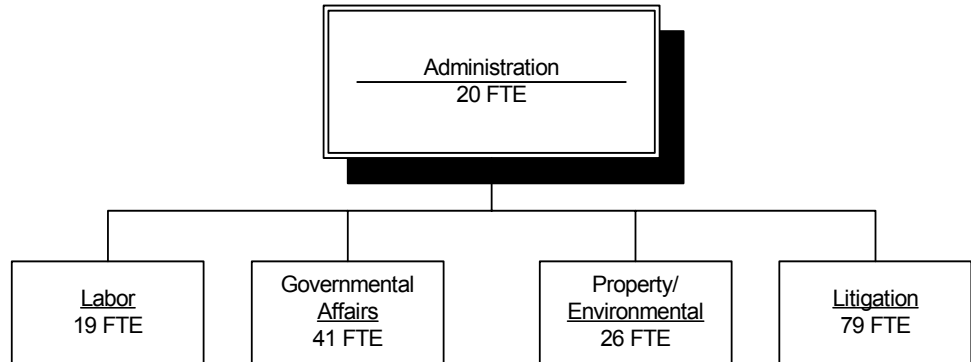
with those of the surrounding suburbs and the State laws. The Municipal and Ordinance Section is presently handling this project.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

We are constantly examining the department to bring us into best practices of the legal industry:

- ❖ Establishing the appropriate supervisory/staff ratios;
- ❖ Full utilization of technology;
- ❖ Complete department-wide workforce analysis;
- ❖ Implementation of a computerized case management and document system; and
- ❖ Reduction of operational costs.

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PERFORMANCE GOALS, MEASURES AND TARGETS

Goals: Measures	2003-03 Actual	2003-04 Projection	2004-05 Target
Maximize and monitor the level of client satisfaction with department services: Percent of clients rating department services satisfactory or better.	90%	95%	97.5%
Provide effective, ongoing and proactive advice and counseling to all City departments: Percent of timely responses to written assignments	83.5%	88.75%	92.5%
Provide continuous professional skills training to all lawyers and staff to maximize the quality and efficiency of legal services delivered to the City: Percent of professional staff attending at least one external training program per year	100%	100%	100%
Maximize the City's financial position through aggressive collection of City revenues, effective representation in claims and litigation for and against the City, and effective and timely advice and representation of the City in commercial and development transactions: Levels of revenue collections	\$1,578,866.44	\$2,300,000	\$1,000,000

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EXPENDITURES

	2002-03 Actual Expense	2003-04 Redbook	2004-05 Mayor's Budget Rec	Variance	Variance Percent
Salary & Wages	\$ 12,066,196	\$ 13,617,362	\$ 11,990,142	\$ (1,627,220)	-12%
Employee Benefits	5,294,117	8,041,377	7,793,172	(248,205)	-3%
Prof/Contractual	6,620,693	2,868,561	2,628,823	(239,738)	-8%
Operating Supplies	101,956	304,522	304,522	-	0%
Operating Services	4,013,294	3,140,765	2,409,006	(731,759)	-23%
Capital Equipment	85,131	87,500	87,500	-	0%
Other Expenses	128,733	56,000	56,000	-	0%
TOTAL	\$ 28,310,120	\$ 28,116,087	\$ 25,269,165	\$ (2,846,922)	-10%
POSITIONS	193	227	185	(42)	-19%

REVENUES

	2002-03 Actual Revenue	2003-04 Redbook	2004-05 Mayor's Budget Rec	Variance	Variance Percent
Grants/ Shared	\$ 29,883	\$ -	\$ -	-	0%
Sales & Charges	2,958,383	3,408,689	2,934,357	(474,332)	0%
Miscellaneous	117,294	180,000	180,000	-	0%
TOTAL	\$ 3,105,560	\$ 3,588,689	\$ 3,114,357	\$ (474,332)	-13%